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BURMA: Military Refines Stalling Tactics

Burma's military rulers on Friday announced a national convention to set guidelines for the National Assembly in drafting a new constitution. The regime also means to review the draft constitution and to submit it to a national referendum after approving it. Regime officials have publicly warned the National League for Democracy, which last May won 80 percent of the Assembly seats, not to try to form an interim government. The NLD's Assembly delegates met this weekend to discuss the transition from military rule. They called for parliament to be convened in September, for talks with the military, and for the release of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi. [redacted]

Comment: The regime is trying to sidestep the NLD's electoral mandate, and its ploy probably will delay political transition for a year or more. Officials have not explained how the national convention will be chosen, when it will meet, or when the Assembly may convene. They evidently mean to keep Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest. The NLD will come under strong pressure to abandon the conciliatory approach followed since the election. The military has strengthened security in Rangoon, however, and probably will deal firmly with any unrest. [redacted]

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